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ABSTRACT

This booklet explains the operation of New Zealand's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and its relationship to workplace assessment. Discussed first is the NQF's mission of encouraging people to continue their education and training after secondary school and permitting flexibility in where and how people train. The role of the NQF in creating a "seamless" education system integrating secondary education, industry training, and tertiary education is outlined. Examined next are how and who develops the unit standards that function as the NQF's building blocks. The role of the assessor in evaluating learning on the job, the role of the Qualifications Authority in accrediting standards setters who in turn select assessors and monitor the fairness of the assessment process, and requirements for becoming an assessor are explained. Presented next is an emerging model for workplace assessment in small businesses in which the qualifications authority, industry training organizations, and workplace assessors each play specified roles. Three case studies illustrate the operation of the NQF in the dairy manufacturing and building industries and in recognition of prior learning. Concluding the booklet are sources of additional information on the NQF. (MN)

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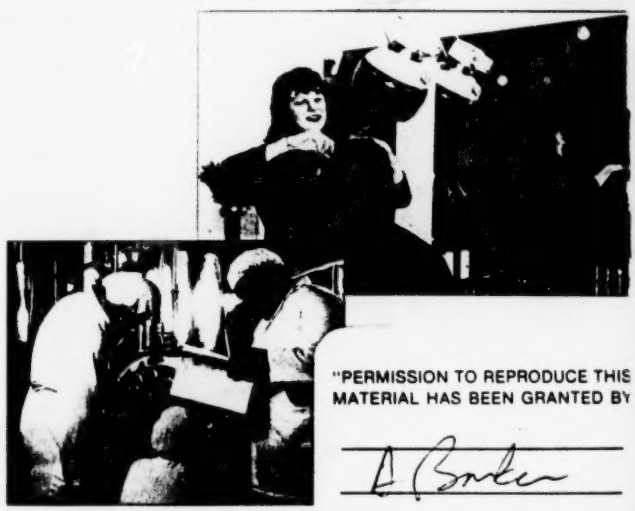

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NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
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WORKING FOR INDUSTRY

An introduction to workplace assessment and the National Qualifications Framework.

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OUR MISSION

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority will promote improvement in the quality of education and training in New Zealand through the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, accessible and flexible National Qualifications Framework.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's customers demand high quality, flexible and innovative products. To succeed in this environment workplaces need a multi-skilled and adaptable workforce. Often, however, workplaces are not well-equipped to meet that need. Many people have given up on training and qualifications. The old qualifications system was very confusing and there were limited opportunities to gain new skills. In some areas there were no nationally recognised courses or qualifications at all.

That's all changing.

The aim is to make training much more relevant and accountable to industry needs. What people learn will be what employers offering jobs need.

DAVID HOOD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, NZQA

The National Qualifications Framework will make learning more relevant, more flexible and more accessible for everyone. It means that training can be designed and tailored to specific industry needs.

That's how our workforce can gain the levels of skills and knowledge needed to be successful.

THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The new National Qualifications Framework is being introduced to encourage people to keep going with their education and training - offering lifelong learning from secondary school onwards.

New skills and qualifications can be gained at any stage, opening up a range of career options and learning pathways.

It will also be possible to get formal recognition for existing skills. This means people won't have to retrain for what they already know.

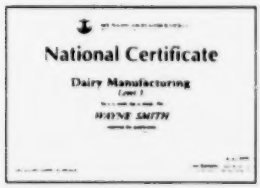
It will also mean much greater choice and flexibility in where and how people train. Learning will be recognised in the same way wherever it takes place - in workplaces, secondary schools, polytechnics, colleges of education, universities, private and government training establishments, wananga, marae and community agencies.

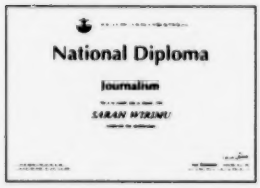
HOW THE FRAMEWORK OPERATES

The Framework is based on unit standards. Unit standards cover the skills, knowledge and attitudes we need to live and work in today's fast changing world.

Each unit standard sets the national standard in a particular area of skill or knowledge. The Framework has 8 levels. Level 1 is the starting-off point that covers all learning up to the middle years of secondary school study. Level 8 offers the most advanced learning.

The Framework creates a "seamless" education system that integrates secondary education, industry training and tertiary education.





- Qualifications consist of specified packages of unit standards.
- There are just three titles for nationally recognised qualifications -**National Certificate**, **National Diploma**, or **Degree**.
- Official proof of completing unit standards is given on the learner's Record of Learning. This record is held on a national database at the Qualifications Authority and is updated as further unit standards or qualifications are completed.
- Learners gain a qualification when they complete the required unit standards.

NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

Record of Learning

Sarah Lastname
123 Diagonal Hall
Foxroughan
Wellington

Student ID: [illegible]
Date of Issue: 12.11.04

Unit ID	Name	Level	Credit Value	Date Completed
1	HORTICULTURE Prepare and sow outdoor seedbeds manually	3	3	11.02
2	PEST CONTROL Observe safety precautions when using pesticides	3	3	11.02
4	LAND SKILLS Maintain hand tools and service small engines	3	3	11.02
5	LAND SKILLS Check and drive a basic wheel tractor	3	3	11.02
7	PEST CONTROL Apply pesticides by non-motorised applicators	3	3	11.02
11	FENCING Repair wire (unreticulated fencing	2	3	11.02
12	FENCING Handle wire	3	3	11.02
14	SOIL STUDIES Demonstrate knowledge of elementary soil properties	3	3	11.02
20	PEST CONTROL Demonstrate knowledge of plant pests, diseases, disorders and their control	3	3	11.02
36	FENCING Select fencing materials	2	3	11.02
37	FENCING Install fencing wire	3	3	11.02

Chief Executive

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A COMMON APPROACH TO SETTING STANDARDS

Industry, professional and educational groups are working with the Qualifications Authority to set standards that are consistent throughout the country. This is vital if qualifications are to be recognised nationally and internationally.

The groups that are responsible for this are made up of all the major "users" of the particular unit standards and qualifications. These groups are recognised by the Qualifications Authority as National Standards Bodies (NSBs) or by the Education and Training Support Agency (ETSA) as Industry Training Organisations (ITOs).

Their main job is to develop qualifications and make sure that standards are set and maintained.

HOW ARE UNIT STANDARDS DEVELOPED?

At the moment, standards-setters from many industries and professions are developing more than six thousand unit standards.

The first step is to identify all the skills, knowledge and attitudes that an industry sector needs. This is called a functional or needs analysis. For example, if the standard was for a particular task in the workplace, the person doing the needs analysis would watch people doing that job, and talk to experienced workers about what's required.

Once that's completed, the unit standard is designed. Unit standards are the basic building blocks of the Qualifications Framework. Unit standards are ***not*** training manuals - they are the agreed standard of performance required. Each unit standard states the observable evidence for the required skill, knowledge and attitudes.

WHO DECIDES WHAT UNIT STANDARDS MAKE UP THE NEW QUALIFICATIONS?

Industries and professions design their own qualifications, tailored to exactly what they want and need. Qualifications will be formed in a range of sizes, shapes and levels, but they all fit on the Framework.

Each standards-setter (NSB/ITO) packages unit standards into their own national qualifications for the group/s they represent. Standards-setters can choose from any unit standards that are registered on the Framework, not just the unit standards they've developed. That means that the same unit standards can be part of different qualifications.

Unit standards are building blocks of the Framework.
They are coherent and meaningful groups of skills, knowledge and attitudes - the outcomes of learning.
They are the standard against which performance is judged.
They are not training programmes or learning modules.

HOW ARE UNIT STANDARDS GAINED ON THE JOB?

Learning can and does happen on the job. In order to gain recognition for skill and knowledge learnt, people have to be able to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the unit standards registered on the Framework.

With this system, people who already have particular skills don't have to retrain to gain unit standards. Their skills can be assessed against unit standards. This is called Recognition of Prior Learning or RPL.

The best person to judge that is someone who already has those skills and knowledge and is able to make a fair assessment.

Often that will be someone on site. That person is called an assessor.

WHO SELECTS ASSESSORS AND MAKES SURE ASSESSMENT IS FAIR?

This is where the standards-setters (NSBs/ITOs) come in again. They set up quality processes to select, train and register their own assessors. (The Qualifications Authority accredits the standards-setters to do this.)

Standards-setters are responsible for:

- Developing their own assessment programmes;
- Making sure that all their assessors have the right skills and knowledge;
- Checking all their assessors' work;
- Deregistering any unsatisfactory assessors;
- Making sure their assessors have enough resources to work with;

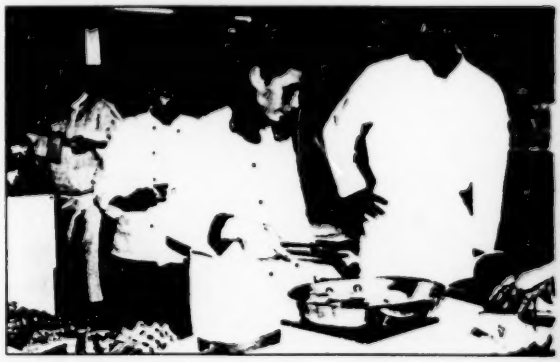
- Making sure all assessments are fair, valid and consistent;
- Reporting back results to both the candidate and the Qualifications Authority.

Checks need to be in place to make sure that any assessment meets the set standard. This process is called moderation.

CAN ANYONE BECOME AN ASSESSOR?

Clearly an assessor needs to have skills and experience in the area they're assessing. They also need to have the right personal skills, such as good communication, judgement, reliability and accuracy.

Assessors will also need to know about assessment procedures and methods. Assessors will be trained in these skills once they have been selected. Each industry will train and supply assessment resources to their assessors according to need.



HOW WILL WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT WORK?

An Emerging Model for Small Business.

Workplace assessment under the Qualifications Framework is a new feature on the industry training scene. The following model sets out the key players and their responsibilities, giving an overview of how the new systems will work for small business.

The **Qualifications Authority** has responsibility for:

- Recognising standards-setters and facilitating the process of developing and reviewing unit standards and qualifications;
- Registering unit standards and qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework;
- Accrediting ITOs/NSBs to register assessors;
- Providing information and support to ITOs and NSBs;
- Administering the Record of Learning, the national database that records all achievement or credit for unit standards;
- Auditing. All systems are subject to audit by the Authority.

Most small businesses will need the extended services and support of an **Industry Training Organisation** (ITO). The ITO will be responsible for:

- Developing unit standards and qualifications and having them registered on the Framework;
- Determining systems for how workplace assessment can work for their industry;
- Becoming accredited by the Qualifications Authority to register assessors;
  This process involves putting in place a

Quality Management System which sets out how: evaluation of assessments is to occur; resources for assessment will be developed and funded; assessors are to be selected, trained and reviewed; candidates/learners can access assessment; candidates/learners will be supported through the process; recognition of prior learning will occur; review and reassessment will occur; assessment and reporting will occur.

In essence, the ITO will develop and implement a structured training and assessment system for its industry.

ITO field officers or **regional assessors** will help implement and oversee the process by:

- Regularly visiting workplaces;
- Taking part in assessment when required;
- Participating in national moderation. Moderation is a system by which assessments are checked for consistency. The emerging model for ITOs and small business tends to include common assessment tasks backed by sampling and national panel checks.
- Taking part in the review of unit standards.

Workplace assessors themselves will take part in the system by:

- Making assessments according to resources produced by the ITO;
- Reporting results of assessment to the ITO, who in turn forwards results to the Qualifications Authority for inclusion on the Record of Learning.

The relationship between the ITO and workplace assessor will have to be formalised by a contract to ensure both parties are aware of their responsibilities.

Case Study 1: The Dairy Manufacturing Industry

Wayne has worked at the Anchor Morrinsville factory for 6 years. He wants to increase his skills. He's training on and off the job for the National Certificate in Dairy Manufacturing.

So far Wayne has gained 4 out of the 22 unit standards from levels 1, 2 and 3 that make up this qualification. His skills and knowledge have been evaluated in areas ranging from communication and problem-solving, to safety practices and understanding microbiological controls.

He's been assessed in these unit standards by two of his co-workers, Angela and Barry, who are assessors at the factory. The assessors are registered by the Dairy Industry Training Organisation (ITO). The ITO has also been involved in selecting prospective assessors - mainly factory supervisors - and putting them through a nationally co-ordinated training programme.

The ITO is also responsible for developing unit standards for the National Certificate in Dairy Manufacturing. Both the unit standards and the National Certificate are registered on the National Qualifications Framework.

Delivery requires providers to put the flesh on the standards by adding key components such as content, teaching and learning approaches, resources and assessment tasks.

The registered unit standard is the starting point for Wayne's assessment. His assessors, Angela and Barry have, together with the factory's other registered assessors, designed checklists for the unit standards they assess. The assessors have to work out the best way to collect and measure the evidence to decide if the candidate being assessed is competent in all aspects specified in the unit standard.

This evidence is usually obtained through observing the candidate in the workplace and recording what is seen on checklists for the unit standards. Each assessor has checklists for their own areas of expertise, making sure that the national unit standards relate to their local situation.

The Dairy ITO is also involved at the factory. The ITO sends out a regional moderator to check that the assessors are assessing to the same standard. The moderator looks at the way the assessors develop their checklists and observes assessment in progress.

Moderation panels, made up of assessors from different factories, are also involved to ensure that assessments between factories are consistent.

The various checks ensure that Wayne's assessment is up to the requirements of the unit standard and that his skills can be recognised and credited towards his National Certificate.

Case Study 2: The Building Industry

Most builders in this country train on the job. Unlike large factories and institutions, building firms tend to be one or two person operations working on a variety of sites. The challenge for the NZ Federated Builders and Contractors ITO has been to design a system that fits the flexible, mobile industry they represent.

The assessment system the Builders ITO has designed is built around:

- Common assessments contained in a manual;
- Selecting, training and registering employers as assessors;
- Checks of site assessments by regional training managers.

Under this system each trainee/apprentice will have his/her own apprenticeship manual, designed by the ITO. The manual includes all the unit standards in the National Certificate in Carpentry, the common assessment tasks and check lists to be marked by assessors, and a section on workplace assessment procedures (including how to deal with any appeals) for the employer to follow.

In more theory-based areas, the assessment will be marked off by a training provider such as a local polytechnic. Where apprentices are demonstrating competence in the workplace, the assessments will be made by an employer acting as an assessor.

The ITO will keep a register of builders it has on contract to act as workplace assessors. Steve, a local builder, wants to be on the register. In his business Steve has a staff of two qualified builders and one full-time apprentice. From time to time he also takes on other trainees and will assess them as part of a group apprenticeship system. To become an assessor Steve has to be selected by one of the ITO's regional training managers.

Regional training managers will select employers according to their "training capacity". This capacity is defined by the ITO as:

- Being well-regarded in the industry, operating their business on a professional and ongoing basis;
- Having good "people skills";
- Having qualified staff who are active in the industry;
- Having the appropriate equipment;
- Having a good understanding of training requirements and standards.

The ITO will ensure that all of its assessors receive the necessary training and credit for assessment. It will also check on assessments they make.

Tom is one of the ITO's six regional training managers. His job is to check assessments made on site. In this role he acts as a moderator. Like Steve, Tom is selected by the ITO because of his knowledge of the industry. Tom's background as a carpenter and the skills he developed as a trainer at a large building supplier play a key part in his appointment.

Unlike Steve who is active in the industry, Tom is employed by the ITO which has also trained him as a moderator. As a moderator, Tom will attend the ITO's regular seminars which compare assessments and discuss standards and their interpretation.

Along with moderation Tom will also be responsible for selecting and training employers to act as assessors. If assessors in his region are not making consistent assessments Tom is responsible for visiting them and updating their training. In cases of ongoing

variations in assessment the employers may have their registration as assessors reviewed or withdrawn.

Steve will assess apprentices according to their manual. He will usually examine their performance on a monthly basis and sign off the check list when he judges the apprentices competent. When assessment for a unit standard is completed Steve will send notification to Tom at the ITO, who will in turn inform the Qualifications Authority for credit to be entered onto the national database. Tom will randomly select assessments and check these during his systematic site visits.

Apprentices will have an ongoing record of progress in their manual. They will also have official proof of credit for unit standards on their Record of Learning, sent out by the Qualifications Authority.

Case Study 3: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Since leaving school at 15, Anahera has worked in a variety of retail outlets as a salesperson and has had responsibility for bookkeeping. She is currently a supervisor in the footwear department of a large store, a position she has held for two years.

Anahera wishes to increase her skill and knowledge in business management through further formal training. Because further training will cost Anahera time and money she wishes to have her current level of skill and knowledge recognised. To do this Anahera can approach her company's workplace assessor and ask for an assessment of her prior learning against unit standards.

The workplace assessor will have been trained in this type of assessment and be registered

as an assessor with her Industry Training Organisation. (Alternatively, Anahera could approach an assessment centre or her local polytechnic with RPL facilities.)

The assessor will work with Anahera to collect evidence of her capabilities. This evidence could come from:

- Documents related to her supervisory work, record-keeping, stock control, balance sheets, costings, ledgers, computer printouts and filing systems;
- Designs and photographs of displays she has created;
- A CV with job descriptions and references from employers;
- Vocational certificates in typing, word-processing, spreadsheets;
- Articles she wrote as a volunteer for a community newspaper;
- Minutes she took as secretary.

The assessor will then evaluate this evidence against the requirements of the National Certificate in Business Management and credit Anahera with the relevant unit standards.

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MORE INFORMATION ON THE FRAMEWORK

For further information on how:

- NSBs are accredited to register assessors, the policy book *Guidelines and Criteria for the Accreditation of National Standards Bodies to Register Assessors* is recommended.
- Providers become accredited, the policy book *Guidelines and Criteria for Accreditation to offer National Certificates and National Diplomas* is recommended.
- NSBs and providers have their recognition extended to cover RPL, the policy book *The Recognition of Prior Learning* is recommended.

A video on workplace assessment is also available. The video, called *Working for Industry*, uses the dairy industry assessment system as a case study of how workplace assessment can operate.

The policy books cost $15.00 each, the video costs $20.00 (GST inclusive).

To order any of these resources please contact:

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New Zealand Qualifications Authority,
PO Box 160, Wellington.

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